

Colorado Springs School District 11
DAC (District Accountability Committee) Accreditation Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 14, 2022 (5:00pm-6:30pm)
www.d11.org/Page/6992

Recording of meeting commenced at 4:57PM

Meeting Attendees:

Clara Hoellerbauer, Eric Mason, Hillary Hinton, Julie Ott, Lauren Nelson, Lyman Kaiser, Marion Clawson, Mary Coleman, Parth Melpakam, Stacy Brisben, Thom Moore, Velvet Stepanek

Agenda discussion: (some recorded audio difficulties with in person participants)

I. Loop Closure

Future agenda topics:

Curriculum and Karol Gates 03/28/22- we will ask how her work is going as her department is one of the major improvement strategies

ELL (Nicole Girardin) and Title I (Valerie Scates) coming in April and Colorado College's

Jessica Wise (research study on enrollment) coming in May

II. Galileo Renewal – Eric Mason

Requests for proposals for a new District Assessment System have taken place but we are waiting for our Procurement department to complete their process and until that is complete, everything must remain confidential. We may need to schedule an update with this committee once everything has been finalized.

We are technically in our sixth year of the contract with our current vendor of our district benchmark provider. The typical contract is four years and then there usually is an extension year. We had done the extension year and then COVID hit during the extension year which would have been the year that we would be doing an RFP. So, we would have done one last year, except we made the determination that it was not a good idea to try to do an RFP in the middle of the pandemic. Not knowing what last year was going to look like, it was a really good decision, because last year was a very challenging year for everyone and it would have been hard to get that done with "changing horses" midstream for testing. This year, with PowerSchool implementation, we felt it best to wait until now (for next year) to look at changing the District Benchmark Assessment. The RFP (Request for Proposal) started back in October. We pulled a team together that developed a set of values that we were looking for in a new or augmented testing system. We will either augment and make changes with our current vendor and contract, or look for an entirely new product. We expected to get maybe 5-7 vendors because we set high standards for the requested request for proposals. They have to be able to give us a scale score and we have to have normed data. They have to be able to look at academic growth over time and it has to give predictions for the state test (CMAS). That is a high bar to set, there are not many vendors that can do that. The request for proposals is public information. Only three vendors submitted proposals. We can request certain vendors apply. We did request a certain vendor apply, but they chose not to

do so. This time around we really wanted to highlight the resources that can be used by teachers, families and students because we felt that there was a gap with our current vendor. We wanted more reporting for parents, students and teachers that we do not have with our current vendor. We also highlighted the need to provide solid data for high schools and additional resources for high schools. We had two vendors plus our current vendor present their demos virtually for about 60 attendees from various roles in the district. The attendees were requested to ask questions and then submit a survey for each vendor with their perspectives. We have a finalist vendor who was able to demonstrate that they had significant support for high school data and has an excellent growth data system. This vendor also provides reports that can be used by teachers at all grade levels. Our hope is that that contract will be completed within the next week or two and we can hopefully make an announcement by early to mid-April.

Questions?

Mary Coleman- What is the impetus for the change? When was the last time it changed? How will it or will it not disrupt the classroom?

Eric Mason- The last time we replaced a new testing system was six years ago when we replaced that system (that we had used since 2005 or so) with our current vendor in 2015, due to the Deputy Superintendent (at that time) holding community group conversations with teachers and principals and the general consensus was that the previous system had become a “number” that did not have any real value for instructional improvement, especially at the high school level. Our current vendor was chosen at that time because they had some nice benefits for teachers. We could build custom tests in their system and teachers could build their own assessment systems in there. They had 150,000 items we could choose from for free, it didn't cost us anything more, and we could buy additional items if we wanted to. They were able to give us scale scores, growth and predictions for the state test. It really did check several boxes at the time, all while saving the district about \$150,000 a year by using one system, rather than two, at the time. Last year, we purchased Performance Matters which is a formative testing system that we bought along with PowerSchool, and we received a significant discount. We felt it was a better product than our current vendor. Performance Matters also has the capability to move the quiz/test score directly into the teacher's grade book. Our current vendor has had several issues with uploading students/teachers and class rosters as well as technical issues and staffing changes that have exhausted the assessment team over the last two years.

With the possibility of a new vendor being chosen, there will be significant training that will have to happen next year. We will be prepared for it and bring in trainers, if necessary, in August and September to train our School Assessment Coordinators including in person and virtual trainings.

Mary Coleman- How will the kids be impacted with a new system? I hope the teacher feedback has been there, because it doesn't feel like the community feedback has been there.

Eric Mason- On the parent side with our current vendor, we have heard from parents asking how they can look at their student's results and our current vendor has not provided a valuable way of doing that. An important piece for a district benchmark is that it needs to do a good job at identifying those students at the “tails” of the bell curve (not just the middle,

where the greater student population lies) to help us make sure that they're getting the right resources and interventions as well. Form tests, like our current vendor, CMAS and SAT have basically exactly the same test questions for all students. The other type of test is an adaptive assessment which will choose the next question based upon how the student is adapting with their previous answers. Adaptive tests tend to assist more with the students at the "tails". It will give us a lot more data for students who are struggling as it will carry them down further into questions that they may be able to answer at an easier level by finding a question that they can answer correctly. The same applies at the top end where the student can get all the answers correct, so the test will keep pushing more difficult questions until the student may struggle with those questions. This helps us determine the edge of their learning. The downside is that the longer a student answers questions correctly, the longer they test. The nice thing about it is that the next time a student tests, the assessment will know where the student placed during the last test, and start from there. With an adaptive test, trend data for the student will test them throughout the year and give us a more accurate understanding of where they are academically. The same is said for a student who tests at a lower level. That student will start where they were previously and move forward from there. These tests are also developed in a way to limit test frustration. Once they receive the first round of data, that baseline if you will, then it informs future assessments.

Lyman Kaiser- Will the new assessment system work with the Performance Matters' test bank for CIAs (Common Interim Assessments)?

Eric Mason- none of the RFP vendors are able to integrate with Performance Matters. We have the benefit of Performance Matters being our next step. The way the assessment team is going to address this is, we will give the district benchmark, you look at your results, you use that to inform which students are at the highest need for intervention and then you immediately work in common interim assessments and formative assessments to create that cycle of teaching and learning. Then you get that check-in again in winter and check-in again in spring to get the scale scores to see if the work that you're doing is making a big difference.

Velvet Stepanek- We also have an RFP out for a new math curriculum. Is someone from your team looking at that as well and how it will fit in to the overall plan for testing in the district?

Eric Mason- I have no information on the vendors for the math curriculum RFP because that information is confidential and I am not part of that decision-making team. I do not know if there can be some synergy between the system we are looking at and the new math curriculum vendor. I do feel that if we can, then we should align our work more, within the district.

Velvet Stepanek- How much professional development will our teachers have with all of this new information? Will they have enough time to be trained? I hope everyone is talking about how that will be handled.

Eric Mason- As soon as we were told there will be a new student information system, we decided to hold off on a new assessment vendor so that there would not be too much taking place concurrently. There will be weaknesses in every testing system. The effect of the pandemic on student learning and the learning loss, shows that we need an assessment

system that teachers can be confident that they can trust and that can inform the instructional cycle.

The RFP allows us to reassess our current vendor and allows us to look at other vendors to see if there is some “gold” out there that we have not been “mining”. Change for change’s sake is not good, but change in this way at this time, I am hoping, will be seen as the district doing its job to improve data in a time when we really need to know where students are. I am hoping that will outweigh the challenges around the change of learning a new system. Marion Clawson- As you are in charge of the Assessment Department, why are you not included in any new curriculum being determined? Can you just talk about it, even after the process is already underway?

Eric Mason- I have asked to meet regarding the RFPs and how they connect and am waiting for a response. There is a separation between Assessment and Curriculum and Instruction. Curriculum and Instruction is teacher, department head and facilitator controlled and teacher, department head and facilitator managed. The curricula that goes into tests is determined by the Curriculum and Instruction department. The Assessment department is to be objective and external to provide a way for the district to measure whether or not schools and programs are successful, including state testing and accountability. The Assessment department guides how to build the test and show you how to look at the data that comes out of the test, but not what goes into the test. The Instruction and Curriculum department determines what goes on the test.

There is a member of the math curriculum RFP that was also a member of the benchmark assessment RFP, so there is one person in common for both.

Lyman Kaiser- One of the key pieces of the One Plan was an initiative about improved instruction between Curriculum and Instruction and Education Insights working closely together on these issues, along with the EDSLs, to make sure that all elements of Central Administration were on the same team and working in synergy.

Mary Coleman- We haven’t really talked about the impact on the actual students. We’ve had a lot of conversation about staff and process, but not actually talked about the kids very much at all.

Eric Mason- Students may not experience much of a difference. It may look a little different in the system that they go into, but their experience is going to be very similar to what they have experienced before.

The RFP team specifically called out, “We want resources that teachers can use with students and resources that can be used in a parent/teacher conference”.

Additional discussion:

Hoonuit – Eric Mason

We purchased this product and it worked very well last year when it was its own company. PowerSchool purchased and we have had issues since that time. It is basically broken. We are still waiting for the fixes to be put in place. We have some enrollment data, but it is coming very slowly and we have yet to vet everything to make sure everything is validated. This is a very time intensive process. With all of the delays from Hoonuit, and we are still waiting, we hope to validate a portion of the dashboards we might receive prior to the One

Plan Symposium in June. If that system is not ready, my staff will be running Excel files and producing bar charts and we will make it happen because we are working with Natasha and Chad on their work with schools, and they have given us a list of data available to schools for their One Plans. Whatever we don't have available in Performance Matters or Hoonuit, we will build from flat files. We will do what we have to do to get the information out to schools.

Grading system for middle and high schools – Marion Clawson

I feel that our grades do not communicate student learning and achievement properly. I plan to bring this up at the next DAC (District Accountability Committee) meeting to start a conversation about it. We need consistency throughout the district. How can we improve the process of student learning in the classroom and how we can support teachers in that journey.

Clara Hoellerbauer- Progress is going to be very slow when we move to anything consistent. Eric Mason- Grades have always been a very unique special kind of subjectivity that teachers and instructors have to provide. I always felt that the grades are sometimes just as reflective of student's social emotional experiences as they were reflections of their academic learning.

Stacy Brisben- Let's say, 3 weeks ago, a student couldn't add two digit numbers, but three weeks later they can, and they want to average those two stamps in time. That doesn't really represent what they know. It should really be at this point in time, where are we are we proficient in this score skill? Are we still working towards that skill? Have we advanced that skill? I think that's also a philosophy debate that you'll get with teachers... to judge where they are right now so that we know where we're going and how far we need to move forward and that's another time-consuming piece to differentiate.

Meeting adjourned at 6:32PM

DAC Accreditation meeting minutes can be found in the DAC Drop box:

<https://www.dropbox.com/login?cont=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fh>

Meeting agenda and minutes can also be found on the D11 Accreditation website here:

<https://www.d11.org/Page/6992>